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INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

RUEHGB/AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD PRIORITY 0738

RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY

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RUEKJCS/Joint STAFF WASHDC//J-3/J-5// PRIORITY

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 005294

SIPDIS

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/13/2021

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [TU](#)

SUBJECT: TURKEY: PRO-KURDISH PARTY CALLS FOR UNILATERAL PKK
CEASEFIRE

REF: A. (A) ANKARA 5269

[B.](#) (B) ANKARA 5264

Classified By: A/DCM Dan Sreebny for Reasons 1.4(b, d)

[¶](#)1. (SBU) SUMMARY. The pro-Kurdish Democratic Society Party (DTP) issued an unprecedented call for a unilateral PKK ceasefire during a September 11 press conference. Appearing before the press in Ankara, DTP chairman Ahmet Turk portrayed the move as a response to the party's grassroots' desires. A group of prominent Turks (and Turkish Kurds) followed DTP's call for a ceasefire with a more stringent one of their own on September 12, while a terrorist bombing the same day in Diyarbakir cast these appeals for peace into sharp relief.
END SUMMARY.

[¶](#)2. (U) Turk, speaking to the press at DTP headquarters in Ankara and flanked by the DTP mayors of Diyarbakir and Tunceli, called for a unilateral PKK ceasefire, citing:

--the loss of more than 30,000 lives and \$200 billion in the 25 years of the Turkish-Kurdish conflict;

--a "nationalist chauvinist tide" that undermines the future of Kurd-Turk unity;

--the desire for peace of wide sectors of society; and

--the need for economic and social development in Turkey's southeast.

[¶](#)3. (SBU) Turk further stated that an end to hostilities would allow Turkey to prepare the ground for a peaceful, democratic solution to the Kurdish problem based on dialogue, and permit all those living in Turkey "to live honorably with their own language, identity, color." He called on the PKK to respond positively and added that if the PKK declares a ceasefire, "the necessary conditions to make it a lasting one should be created."

[¶](#)4. (C) Unlike previous ceasefire calls, Turk directed this statement solely at the PKK. While the DTP -- whose stronghold is in the southeast, where it won 56 mayorships -- holds the GOT accountable for creating the problem originally and for its eventual solution, Turk indicated that the PKK

must take the initial step of a ceasefire. Asked why the DTP had changed its position, Turk told the press the DTP wants to create a new environment in which dialogue will have a chance.

¶5. (SBU) Following closely on the heels of the DTP's appeal, 219 individuals from a broad swath of the Turkish (and Turkish Kurdish) intellectual society released a stronger statement, published in the Turkish mainstream daily Milliyet on September 13, demanding that the PKK unconditionally and immediately stop all violence. Milliyet noted that the intellectuals were not simply calling for a ceasefire, but for the end to violence. One of the signers pointed out that, whereas earlier intellectuals' declarations urged action by both the PKK and the government, this statement was a call to the PKK to abandon its weapons. Signatories included academics, writers, current and former members of parliament, journalists, and bar and medical chamber heads. Among the names of note are writer Adalet Agaoglu, CHP Hakkari MP Esat Canan, Yeni Safak editor-in-chief Mustafa Karaalioglu, actor/director Ugur Yucel, authors Ipek Calislar, Hrant Dink, Ali Bayramoglu, Derya Sazak, and Sahin Alpay.

¶6. (U) The September 12 bombing in Diyarbakir, which killed 11 and wounded 15 (ref A), grabbed the headlines on September 13. National dailies played the bombing as a response to the increased political pressure on the PKK from the DTP's and the intellectuals' appeals.

¶7. (C) COMMENT. DTP, a legal political party, has at least indirect contact with, and often reflects views associated with the PKK. Previous ceasefire calls by the DTP and its predecessor parties (DEHAP, HADEP) have looked to both

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security forces and the PKK; this is their first unilateral call. It appears to acknowledge that nothing positive can happen on the ground as long as the violence continues. Turk's ceasefire call has been met with predictable skepticism by Embassy contacts. At the same time, it puts on the line Turk's credibility (and that of Diyarbakir mayor Baydemir and Tunceli mayor Abdil) with their constituents and marks a noteworthy change in DTP tactics. It also fits with DTP's aim to style itself as the Sinn Fein of Turkish/Kurdish politics -- they have stated in public and in private that they want to make themselves the arbiters of a political solution. Turk insisted publicly that the pressure to make this call originated with the grassroots, but it is unlikely he would have gone forward without at least indirect encouragement from imprisoned PKK leader Ocalan, who passes messages via his lawyers. END COMMENT.

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